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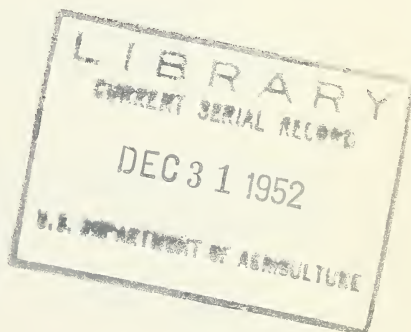
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P432

REPORT, 1951/52.

OF  
THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL  
1952



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



## Report of the Director of Personnel, 1952

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL,  
*Washington, D. C., October 1, 1952.*

Hon. CHARLES F. BRANNAN,  
*Secretary of Agriculture.*

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I respectfully submit the following report on personnel administration in the Department of Agriculture. The period covered is the fiscal year 1952—July 1, 1951, through June 30, 1952.

Sincerely yours,

T. ROY REID,  
*Director.*



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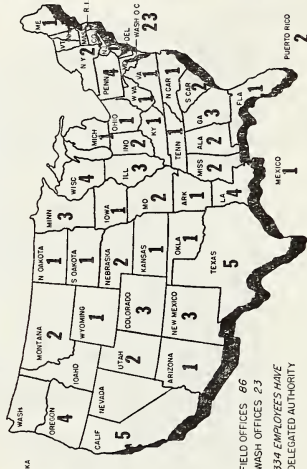
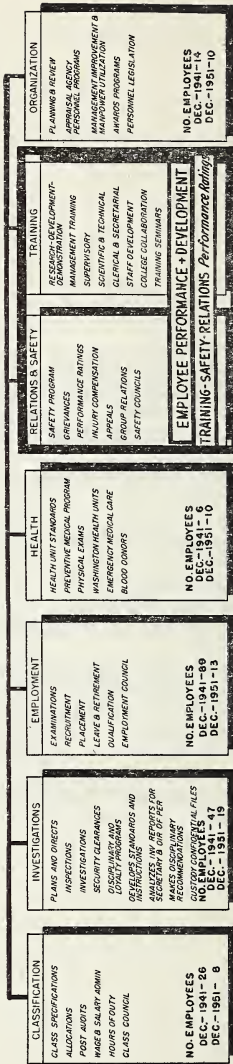
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**ASSISTS SECRETARY • DEVELOP AND PLAN DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS • HAS DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY FOR PERSONNEL PROGRAM • DELEGATES SPECIFIC AUTHORITIES TO AGENCY OFFICIALS • CONTROLS PERSONNEL PROGRAM THROUGH REVIEWS AND POST AUDITS • DIRECTS MANPOWER UTILIZATION AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PHASES OF THE DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM • DIRECTS INTERNAL MANAGEMENT OF OFFICE OF PERSONNEL**

• FUNCTIONS DROPPED -  
 MACHINE TABULATING UNIT  
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 PROCESSING OPERATIONS  
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EFFICIENCY AWARDS - MAN. IMPROV. - MANPOWER  
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1951

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## ANNUAL REPORT

### HIGH LIGHTS

The 1952 fiscal year was a very active one in the field of personnel administration. Within the Office of Personnel itself, organizational changes occurred directly affecting programs, the formulation and development of which covered well over a decade of leadership and progress.<sup>1</sup>

The Fifth Biennial Personnel Meeting of the Department was held in Chicago, Ill., from December 3 to 7, 1951. In keeping with the President's National Manpower Mobilization Policy issued in January 1951, the theme of the meeting was "Better Employee Utilization and Improved Management." As in previous meetings, work committees composed of administrators and supervisors were established to consider previously determined functional areas affecting the theme of the Conference. We have recently been advised that reports of the five biennial meetings have been consolidated into one volume and are in regular use in one of the teaching operations of the Maxwell Graduate School of Syracuse University.

The Department's annual ceremony publicly recognizing Agriculture's outstanding employees was held on May 15, 1952, at the Sylvan Theatre on the Washington Monument Grounds. The President of the United States was the guest speaker. An all-time record attendance enjoyed music presented by the United States Marine Band, witnessed Secretary Brannan's presentation of distinguished, superior, and 40-year length of service awards and enjoyed the President's stimulating address. Papers throughout the country, including the New York Times, publicized not only President Truman's talk but the award winners as well.

Economic defense and military mobilization made itself felt in certain of the Department's operations. Recruitment of properly qualified employees, particularly in the technical fields, appeared as a problem; expanding and relatively new programs such as the Point IV program, called for detailed personnel attention, study, and action.

Legislative action in the form of statutes, riders, and amendments required numerous revisions in departmental regulations and operating procedures: The Whitten amendment—"to prevent excessively rapid promotions in the competitive civil service and to require correction of improper allocations"; the Jensen amendment—"no part of any appropriation or authorization contained in this act shall be used to pay the compensation of any incumbent appointed to any civil office or position which may become vacant during the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 1951, provided \* \* \*"; the Ferguson amendment—"not more than 90 per centum of the amounts shown in the

<sup>1</sup> For a graphic presentation of this decade see exhibit 1.

budget estimate for personnel services shall be available for such service"; the personnel ratio—"no part of any appropriation or authorization contained in this act shall be used to pay the compensation of any employee engaged in personnel work in excess of the number that would be provided by a ratio of one such employee to 115 or a part thereof full-time, part-time, or intermittent employee." Numerous conferences and discussions were necessary to clarify issues arising as a result of the above legislation, to prepare appropriate regulations, and to devise and install the controls necessary for departmental compliance.

Of particular interest to employees was leave legislation which ultimately resulted in a reduction of sick leave from 15 to 13 days per year, annual leave accrual based upon length of service, and an amendment to the Classification Act of 1949 which increased the basic salary rate of classified employees by 10 percent except that no employee was to receive an increase of less than \$300 or more than \$800 per year.

Recommendations resulting from the Department's National Training Conference held at Woodberry Forest School, Virginia, in June 1951 were consolidated in a "Guide for Action." The Administrative and Supervisory Training Section of the Guide contains the following main topics:

- (1) What To Expect From Orientation.
- (2) Over-All Policy.
- (3) Scope of Supervisory and Administrative Training.
- (4) Responsibility for Providing Supervisory and Administrative Training.
- (5) Things for Agencies To Do.
- (6) Things for the Department To Do.
- (7) Some Vehicles To Be Used.

Members of the Office of Personnel reviewed the programs of 31 field offices and 24 Washington offices operating under delegated personnel authority during the fiscal year. In general, the reviews disclosed a wholesome situation. Delegated authorities were being exercised correctly. Personnel problems confronting the agencies were explored and in many instances reviewers were able to be of assistance in the solution of problems.

Full-time employment of the Department numbered 66,852 on June 30, 1951, as compared with 64,587 on June 30, 1952. Part-time and intermittent employees totaled 14,210 compared with 13,662 on June 30, 1952. The turn-over rate, excluding the separation of temporary limited personnel and the separation due to a reduction in force for the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, was  $3\frac{3}{10}$  percent and for the month of June,  $1\frac{3}{10}$  percent, both of which figures were considerably below comparable figures for the previous fiscal year (for detailed statistics, see USDA monthly statistical summary of employment).

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

As a result of a reduction in funds, the Office of Personnel found it necessary to abolish the Division of Training and the Division of Personnel Relations and Safety with a combined total of 14 occupied positions. Included in the work of the divisions were such functions as training, personnel relations, performance ratings and requirements,

grievances and appeals procedure, and safety. In order to maintain service and control in these fields, a new division staffed with four employees called Employee Performance and Development was created. While it is difficult to determine the full impact of the fund reduction upon the effectiveness of the Department's operations, it should be stated that certain programs including many training and orientation activities, safety, employee counseling, analysis of wage rates, the diabetic survey follow-up resulting from the tuberculosis examinations and portions of the Department's employment examination work, had to be curtailed or discontinued.

### FIFTH BIENNIAL PERSONNEL MEETING

Last year marked the Fifth Personnel Management Meeting sponsored by the Department for the purpose of focusing the attention of supervisors and administrators as well as personnel workers on management problems which play such an important part in the effectiveness of our operations.

Recommendations<sup>2</sup> formulated and adopted by the meeting not only give guidance to our future policies and operation but provide an excellent opportunity for personnel people to work with technicians and administrators in improving their mutual understanding of management problems.

The December meeting approved 89 recommendations covering various phases of personnel administration. Of these recommendations, 37 have been acted upon and completed, 29 are continuing projects of long-range character such as training programs, common services, co-operative arrangements, review programs, and liaison activities while the remaining 23 require further consideration and action by this office including the completion of negotiations with other agencies.

### INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAMS

During the past fiscal year, the Office of Personnel continued to stress the importance of incentive programs as a segment of management improvement. Counsel sessions were held with Department agencies to guide and assist them in the application of laws and regulations pertaining to the administration and operation of all phases of the awards—cash awards, efficiency awards, and step increases for superior accomplishment. The Department increased its delegation of authority to agencies to take action in the field of cash awards. Offices, both in Washington and the field, now take final action and make payment of cash awards for suggestions in amounts up to and including \$100. The new plan provided for the establishment of an annual expenditure limitation for each agency of the Department. Within that limitation, agency awards committees are authorized, after exercising proper review and evaluation of suggestions, to approve for payment cash awards not in excess of \$100. This delegation of authority should give increased emphasis to the program. Last fiscal year, the Department received its largest number of nominations for honor awards indicating that this, our oldest incentive program, is well-established.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Fifth Personnel Management Meeting, USDA.



Legislative restrictions placed upon the efficiency awards program plus mandatory centralized operation apparently continue to prevent any rapid growth of this type of an award. Last year's Budget Bureau report, however, indicated that the Department of Agriculture was leading other Government agencies in the use of this type of award.

#### **POINT IV PROGRAM OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION**

The Department's participation in the Point IV program, a plan of teaching and sharing America's scientific knowledge and technical skills with the other people of the world, created numerous new personnel problems necessitating revisions in personnel policies and procedures. The combination of the statutory and procedural elements of the foreign service and the domestic civil-service systems into the Point IV program could hardly be expected to result in systems geared to the personnel and operating needs of the new program. Policy conflicts and problems emerged upon such basic elements of personnel administration as qualification standards, basic pay and classification standards, to cite only a few which have already been settled expediently. Recruitment for overseas positions in the Middle East and the Far East, Africa and isolated countries such as Burma and Thailand is urgent, complex and difficult. The urgency stems from the need to meet the staffing timetable of the various countries. The complexity and difficulty stems from the rigid standards, the highly competitive employment situation in this country and the unwillingness of eligibles to go abroad. The overseas employment of personnel under conditions described above required a revision at the Department level of practically all the usual personnel programs from direction and administration to health.

While the Point IV work is exclusively handled by one agency, namely the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, there nevertheless exists a departmental responsibility for recruitment and placement of competent and suitable personnel needed in developing and administering the various agricultural phases of the work. In the past fiscal year, 146 persons have been recruited to work on Point IV projects in 33 foreign countries participating in the program. Recruitment for overseas agricultural positions in all Federal and public international agencies under this program is under the direction of the Department and is operated through the establishment of a roster of agriculturists available for foreign assignments. The roster is augmented, as placement needs require, through special recruitment efforts conducted by the Department. It is expected that the recruitment of agriculturists for foreign assignment will continue during the present fiscal year since there are a large number of authorized positions yet to be filled.

#### **CONSOLIDATED OFFICES AND COMMON SERVICES**

In view of the progress made in the Department's program of headquartering all USDA personnel having county responsibilities in a single office and consolidating personnel with State-wide responsibilities in a single State office, the Secretary has requested that careful consideration be given to the possibility of working out arrangements

for handling common administrative needs in these offices (Office of the Secretary Memorandum, February 15, 1951). To accomplish this objective a joint study of the field organization of the Department is now in progress (Office of the Secretary Memorandum, February 20, 1952). The Office of Personnel has a representative on the committee directing this project and members have already visited several of the consolidated offices in order to determine respective administrative needs and survey the possibility of consolidated operations. Because of the scope of the objectives, the survey is expected to extend over a considerable period of time.

### ORGANIZATION

During the fiscal year the Office of Personnel reviewed 164 requests for organization changes submitted by the various agencies for prior approval. The review of organization changes usually necessitates consultation with agency representatives and sometimes clearance with other staff offices at the departmental level.

For the most part, the organizational changes approved in the Department were minor and resulted in adjustments at the sectional level and below. However, there were two major reorganizations in the Department. These dealt with a regrouping of functional activities in the Rural Electrification Administration and in the Soil Conservation Service to provide better working arrangements and emphasis on certain program activities. In neither case were any new functional responsibilities added or changed.

In the Soil Conservation Service, functions were consolidated and regrouped at both the national and regional office level. A new position of assistant chief was established for cooperative program relations, and work under an assistant chief of Service for Operations was reassigned into three main groups of Engineering, Planning, and Soil and Plant Management. The regional office organization follows the same general pattern.

In the case of the Rural Electrification Administration, the increasing volume of work without a corresponding increase in staff made it necessary to shift manpower in order to provide more attention to the telephone program and to operate under a new principle of placing greater reliance on the growing maturity of borrowers. The reorganization, effective July 1, 1952, provided a shift of people whereby the telephone staff was increased 50 percent and five new electric distribution area offices were set up to provide a single organization to work with distribution borrowers.

### EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A comprehensive study of reduction-in-force problems was undertaken by a committee composed of personnel officers and operating officials of the Department. Several recommendations were made relating to the importance of placing greater emphasis upon qualifications of competing employees particularly in connection with the "reassignment" provisions of reduction-in-force. The committee report was furnished to the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee which is studying personnel practices, at its request.

A study was made of the various schedule A authorities which are available to the Department for temporary and seasonal employment in the field service. This resulted in a recommendation to the Civil Service Commission for their approval of a consolidation of these several authorities into one simplified authority. Favorable action by the Commission is expected to be given to this proposal and will result in a substantial simplification of schedule A employment processes.

## RECRUITMENT

Steps were taken to strengthen our system of contacts with colleges and universities in regard to recruitment. Representatives of the Office participated in several "Career Carnivals" sponsored by land-grant colleges. Improvements were made in our "Designated Recruitment Officer" plan for publicity contacts with the land-grant colleges in connection with the junior agricultural assistant examination to insure that the needs of all Department agencies are understood by the "contact officer" who is primarily familiar only with the programs of his own normal employing agency. It is hoped that this plan will provide the "contact officer" with information which will enable him to serve as a better representative for all the Department agencies and to give reliable advice to college students with regard to the junior agricultural assistant examination.

Following a recommendation of the Biennial Personnel Conference, standards and guides were prepared for use by agencies in developing a planned, long-range recruitment program. These have been issued to the agencies with a request that each agency formulate a recruitment program which will be submitted to the Office of Personnel for approval.

## EXAMINING PROGRAM

During the fiscal year progress was made in the civil-service examination program. The United States Civil Service Committee of Expert Examiners for the Department of Agriculture was reconstituted as a Board of United States Civil Service Examiners. Specifications for a number of positions not covered by examinations in previous years were developed and additional registers of eligibles made available. Most of the Department's recruitment needs for filling vacancies as they arise in scientific, technical, and professional positions peculiar to Agriculture can now be filled by the selection of appropriate eligibles on short notice. Operations of the Board in Washington and the nine field boards are being constantly improved. The speed with which registers can be established has increased considerably. Some work has been done in gathering basic data to evaluate, on the basis of past experience, the results of the selection methods used, particularly in connection with evaluations of the test material used in the junior agricultural assistant examination. This, of course, will be a continuing program looking to the betterment of examination specifications and selection processes.

During the past year emphasis has been given to refinements of examination specifications and qualification standards to assure recruitment of better qualified eligibles and more economical administration of the examination program. Some examples of accomplishments which were achieved are:



1. Approval by the Civil Service Commission of the Department's recommendation that the eligibility of applicants for open-continuous registers be limited to a period of 18 months unless a new application is submitted or the old application is brought up to date. This will permit the elimination of applications which are no longer current and represents a simplification of the examining process.

2. Approval by the Civil Service Commission of the Department's recommendation to permit the "rerating" of eligibles on register resulting from open-continuous examinations to reflect additional experience or education upon submission of supplementary information.

### **IMPROVEMENT OF SELECTION TECHNIQUES**

Some progress has been made in connection with the examination program to develop improved examinations as a basis for the selection of well-qualified eligibles. Approval has been given by the Civil Service Commission to the use of a new "subject-matter" test for one of the options of the current junior agricultural assistant examination. This test is designed to test candidates' ability to apply "principles" and reasoning capacity rather than mere subject-knowledge as such. Although these efforts are presently somewhat experimental, it is hoped that they will constitute a more selective test than has previously been used.

Efforts have also been made to obtain recognition of the importance of attaching more relative value to the qualitative aspects of experience than to mere length of experience in evaluating candidates for eligibility in examinations. This has necessitated modification of rating schedules and standards used in rating of experience. Continued effort will be made to achieve this objective.

### **EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

During the past year several additional agencies of the Department have formulated programs for executive development in accordance with the Department's Executive Development Agreement with the Civil Service Commission. Plans have been formulated for the inauguration of an internal "examination" for junior-grade employees engaged in professional or other work who are interested in and demonstrate their aptitude for management and administration. Work will continue on this project with a view to announcing the program some time during the current fiscal year.

### **TRAINING AGREEMENTS**

Active participation in the development of training agreements has resulted in the past year as a result of the Whitten amendment. An over-all training agreement for the Department was drafted and submitted to the Commission for approval. Individual training agreements covering certain specific positions by category and grade have already been approved. Under these agreements individuals receive active training so that reserves of qualified employees may be available.

## **PROBATIONARY TRAINEE PROGRAM**

This program, which was started in 1948, has developed to a point where several hundred trainees have been appointed. Under this program the employing agency has an opportunity to train and observe employees while employed as students during summer vacations and to carefully select the outstanding students for permanent appointment. At the present time, this type of examination procedure is in use in recruiting in the fields of soil conservation, range conservation, soil science, agricultural engineering, and veterinary medicine.

## **CAREER PROGRAM**

Efforts have been concentrated on guiding and aiding agencies of the Department to develop agency career programs based on Civil Service Commission standards and Department principles. As of the present time, most of the agencies have approved programs. Agencies are required to consider departmental employees first in filling positions at GS-11 or above. A Department placement roster was established. This roster contains names of Department employees who are available for consideration for placement by promotion or reassignment elsewhere in the Department. Interest in this roster was furthered by requesting supervisors to nominate employees whom they consider to be above average and good potential material for positions of higher grade and more responsibility. Agencies are requested to use this file in filling vacancies prior to selection of someone from outside the Department.

## **COORDINATION OF PLACEMENT EFFORTS**

Continued effort has been made to assure coordination of placement effort within the Department. Care has been exerted to provide that career employees affected by reduction-in-force are accorded full consideration for other positions in accordance with their rights and for appropriate vacancies which arise in their own and other agencies. During the past year there was established an "Inter-Bureau Placement Committee" which is composed of agency placement officers and which provides a useful vehicle for the exchange of employment information. This is similar in purpose and operation to the Inter-departmental Placement Committee sponsored by the Civil Service Commission.

## **JUNIOR MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

The Department is represented on the Committee of Expert Examiners for the junior management assistant examination, and has actively participated with other agencies and the Civil Service Commission in efforts designed to make this a more meaningful examination for the recruitment of future executive talent. Although the Department's greatest need is for college graduates with training in the various agricultural sciences and related fields, a number of opportunities exist each year for junior management assistants who can look forward to careers in the fields of administration and management.



## WAGE BOARDS

During the year, the Office delegated authority to set wage rates to six new boards. Five of these were regional boards replacing four project boards in the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine. The sixth was a new board for all laborers and mechanics employed at field locations of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils and Agricultural Engineering. Creation of the new boards brought the total number of active wage boards in the Department to 26. Operations of these boards were reviewed to obtain as consistent application as possible of the rules and procedures under which they set wage rates for laborers and mechanics throughout the Department.

## SALARY ADMINISTRATION

During the fiscal year, the Civil Service Commission issued pay regulations maintaining the salary of employees occupying positions affected by the Commission's post-audit program under the Classification Act. Pay administration for overseas employees was reviewed by the Commission and the Bureau of the Budget in a joint study of overseas personnel practices made at the direction of Congress.<sup>3</sup> Pay administration for wage employees was the subject of studies conducted by the Bureau of the Budget and the Civil Service Commission and at least one congressional subcommittee. The Bureau was interested in overlapping wage surveys and in steps that might be taken to eliminate them.

The Commission is extending the list of exemptions from the Classification Act of 1949 to include those employees in the trades or occupations whose positions were still covered by the act, while the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Manpower Policies was interested in the effect of no central control of wage-rate setting in the Government. Throughout the study period, wage employees remained subject to controls administered by the Wage Stabilization Board. Although the tendency was to make stabilization controls self-administering, cases involving increases in excess of cost-of-living formerly in the stabilization regulations still had to be submitted by the Department to the stabilization authority for prior approval. To the extent that the foregoing items and others related to wage and salary problems required departmental attention, the Office of Personnel made staff assistants available to direct or expedite and coordinate consideration and action. The Office prepared statements and reports for the Congress, extending cooperation to the agencies, gathered information and data on the surveys and studies, obtained necessary authorization and interpretations, and issued new procedural guides and instructions as required by the enactment of new legislation and the issuance of new rules and regulations.

## POST AUDIT OF POSITION ALLOCATIONS

During the fiscal year an active post-audit program to check upon the validity of position allocations made by the various agencies under

<sup>3</sup> USDA overseas pay and personnel practices, January 1952.

delegated authority was placed in operation. The program takes two basic approaches. One is the ranking of categories of positions in the order of the need for review and the joint review of these positions with the particular agency concerned. This type of survey is under the direct leadership of the Office of Personnel and is thoroughly documented with the view of eliminating any duplication of review by the Civil Service Commission. Under this program, three comprehensive audits were made during the past year of areas of jobs with high priority ranking.

The second approach involves the annual review by Department agencies of a certain percentage of positions in the agency. This includes a plan for each agency to devote approximately 25 percent of its classification man-hours time to the review of positions in operation in order to determine the degree of adherence to classification standards. In addition to the "on the spot" review, all position descriptions are reviewed annually by the employee, supervisor, and position classifier to determine first, if the position description is accurate and, second, if the classification is proper.

### CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATIONS

During the year, this Office worked with the Civil Service Commission in the development of classification specifications for approximately 18 series. Some of these were original series and others were reviews of published specifications. Continued emphasis is being placed on the review of existing specifications in order to improve them and to realign them in the light of current conditions. In each instance as the need arose, a project was initiated. Proposals for improvement were then prepared and submitted to the Civil Service Commission for consideration.

At the present time, 10 series of positions in the Department are under study. Participation in the revision program has been effected by the establishment of committees composed of operating officials and classification and examination personnel for the staff offices and the bureaus. The committee held conferences, developed background information, prepared proposals for submission to the Civil Service Commission and worked with committees established by the Commission in the actual drafting of specifications. As tentative drafts of specifications were developed by the Civil Service Commission, they were reviewed and commented upon by the committees and by operating officials and administrative personnel in the agencies.

### TRAINING SEMINAR

A seminar for agency staff people in charge of employee development was used throughout the year as an economical and practical means for improving the effectiveness of the training and development programs in the Department through an exchange of ideas and appraisal of programs.

### DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISORS

Last year's report cited the compilation of a loose-leaf manual "Guide Posts for Supervisors." The program for the development of

supervisors at all levels has been stepped up through additions, revisions, and experimental use of this manual. A program for appraising supervisory performance throughout the Department was instituted and is being vigorously stimulated by action from the Office of Personnel to assure the proper selection and development of employees for supervisory jobs. A section of "Guide Posts for Supervisors" includes a career development guide with criteria for selection, evaluation, development, and planning for the filling of key jobs throughout the Department.

### **TRAINING IN ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT**

The Secretary's Committee for Training and Administrative Management continued to give active leadership to this program aimed at high-level positions in the Department. Four administrative workshops for field administrators were held in Western States. An institute for Eastern States similar to the one held in Denver last year is planned for the present fiscal year. Following the institute, leaders are expected to organize and follow through on workshops in their local areas with a minimum of direction from the Office of Personnel.

### **JOINT LAND-GRANT COLLEGE DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE ON TRAINING FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE**

This committee continued to function during the past year with its study and recommendations to improve the quality of employees recruited from the colleges. This committee has also given special consideration to some of the problems in the recruitment of people for Point IV agricultural assignments. Agreement was reached that questionnaires would be sent to students indicating the interest of the Department in having potential employees elect to take administrative courses along with their professional and technical courses, thus producing eligibles who are basically trained for administrative responsibilities when they come to the Department.

### **PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS AND RATINGS**

The period covered by this report was the first full year of operation under the Performance Rating Act of 1950. Each agency of the Department had, by the end of the period, gained experience in rating employees at least once under the new plan. Some agencies rated on a fixed annual date, for example, December 31, while others set the rating date for each employee at a fixed period following his appointment to a position and prior to his becoming eligible for a pay increase. There were only a few appeals of ratings. Two were for the rating of outstanding.

Much work was done and progress made in the Department in developing performance requirements. Several agencies now have statements of performance requirements in writing for all employees. While most such statements are descriptive in nature, an increasing number are appearing with quantitative factors. This makes them increasingly useful not only as a basis for supervision and for evaluat-



ing the day-to-day work performance of the employees concerned, but also as a basis for work planning, determination of manpower needs, and estimating budget requirements.

### EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

The Employee Council completed its second year of operation on July 1. It continued as in its first year of operation to make recommendations to the Director of Personnel on various subjects in which employees are interested. While the Council is still in its developmental stage, progress is being shown and it is believed that it will continue to be effective as one means of securing employee attitudes and opinions on matters affecting the interest and welfare of employees.

### FIELD SAFETY COUNCILS

This Office cooperated with the Federal Safety Council in its drive to establish 100 new field councils. The Department supplied 16 of the 100 field coordinators who were named to hold initial meetings. This project should have a beneficial effect on our safety program since it pools the safety information and knowledge of Federal employees in the areas served by the council. The Department has relatively few technical safety men in the field but some of the other departments have a great many. We should be able to get considerable assistance and information for these agencies through the councils.

### EMPLOYEE HEALTH

During the past year over 24,000 calls for service were made at the Department's health rooms in the Washington metropolitan area; over 1,000 employees were seen by the medical officer in addition to the 350 preemployment examinations and the 22 disability retirement examinations which were performed. Cooperation with the American Red Cross has resulted in securing 1,891 pints of blood from employees in the Washington area. The Office continued to cooperate with the Federal Employee Health Unit in Denver, Colo. This unit, which is operated by the United States Public Health Service, not only safeguards our employees' health but is contributing valuable information concerning the cost and benefits of employee-health services.

### COOPERATIVE HEALTH PROGRAM

In Atlanta, Ga., the Production and Marketing Administration maintains a nursing health service available to all Federal employees in the building. Participating agencies reimburse PMA on a per capita cost basis. At the present time, there are approximately 1,200 employees located in the building with 800 of these participating in the service. Cooperative health programs for Federal employees are being considered at other locations. Those that are presently under active consideration are at San Francisco, Calif.; Nashville, Tenn.; New York City, N. Y.; Boston, Mass.; Kansas City, Mo.; and St. Paul, Minn. Recently, the Federal agencies having employees in the Post Office and Customs Building in St. Paul, Minn., met to plan a co-

operative health program. The Post Office Department maintains a health service in this building and has indicated willingness to extend this service to all employees in the building with the reimbursement of \$8 per person per year for the employee served. A committee of five was appointed with the regional medical officer of the Civil Service Commission acting as chairman to work out the details of the agreement.

### **SPECIAL HEALTH PROJECTS**

The Division of Employee Health consulted with the officials of the Eastern Regional Research Laboratory, Wyndmoor, Pa., concerning contamination of drinking water in that laboratory. This Division was not able to determine the avenue of contamination or the method of correction but was able to aid the people there in securing authority from the General Accounting Office to purchase drinking water until the water supplies were satisfactory. The water was contaminated with a specie of earthworm. Because this earthworm is not of itself considered pathogenic, the State district sanitary engineer refused to declare the water nonpotable.

In June, a study was made of the sanitary conditions in parts of regions 1 and 4 of the Forest Service. This review included the adequacy of the medical examinations given to smoke-jumpers by private physicians. The sanitary conditions were found to be generally good with a few areas needing correction. One hundred and forty-five smoke-jumpers were examined; the results were compared with those found by the private physicians and no major differences were noted. This indicated that the examinations performed by the private physicians were dependable.

### **CIVIL DEFENSE**

Funds were secured that permitted the purchase of a minimum amount of first-aid material to be used in equipping first-aid stations for Civil Defense. It is planned that approximately 11 such stations will be established and equipped. The personnel of the Department who have first-aid, medical or nursing training will be assigned to these stations and additional people will be trained in first aid. The food and Drug Administration has indicated their willingness to cooperate in the Civil Defense program so that either a doctor or a nurse can be assigned to each of the stations.

### **INVESTIGATORY SERVICES**

The Office conducted 1,107 investigations of various types, of which 1,062 were full background investigations of employees requiring clearance for access to secret and top-secret material; processed 176 disciplinary actions resulting in reprimand, suspension, removal, or resignation of employees not in good standing; post-audited 235 disciplinary actions taken by agencies under delegated authority which resulted in brief suspensions, removals of temporary employees, or resignations; and reviewed 144 cases which were disposed of without disciplinary action or by the issuance of letters of reprimand.

## SECURITY CLEARANCE

The Office processed and effected security clearance for 137 employees for whom the Department requested passports for official foreign travel; 42 employees or nonemployees nominated by the Department to attend international conferences; 155 employees to have access to material classified up to and including confidential; and 1,062 employees to have access to material classified up to and including secret and top secret. All of the cases in the last-named category required full background investigations.

In addition, the Office reviewed and evaluated 742 Federal Bureau of Investigation reports of full field investigation of persons engaged in the International Development Program under Public Law 165, Eighty-second Congress, commonly known as the Point IV Program. In each such case a certification was made to the Department of State with respect to the granting of clearance.

## LOYALTY PROGRAM

This Office serves the Department Loyalty Board by performing its secretarial and clerical functions; maintaining the loyalty files; and acting as liaison between the Board, the Loyalty Review Board, the FBI, the agencies of the Department, and the employees, in all loyalty matters. This work has increased during the past year because of the increase in new appointees to the various excepted positions who have been the subject of full field investigation which the Department Loyalty Board is required to adjudicate, and also because of the need for readjudicating many previously closed cases under the revised loyalty standard prescribed by Executive Order 10241 of April 28, 1951.

## AGENCY ACTIVITIES

During the fiscal year, the Rural Electrification Administration used the group oral-interview process in evaluating candidates for new appointments and promotions. The Agency feels that this technique improved the selection process under their promotion-from-within policy by permitting supervisors and technicians to appraise personality factors and social skills not easily recognizable by the usual interviewing or examining processes. As a result of the group oral interviews, it appeared that more reliable evaluations could be made of such factors as initiative, tact, social awareness, leadership, cooperativeness, alertness to group attitudes, poise, and the ability to speak effectively. The Agency expects to continue the use of the oral interview on a limited basis for the filling of certain types of vacancies where there are more than five qualified applicants and where the personality factors and social skills, previously mentioned, are fundamental aspects of the position.

In the Production and Marketing Administration, budget reductions for the 1952 fiscal year necessitated a reduction-in-force in which 164 employees were to be separated. As a result of present reduction-in-force regulations and procedures, it became necessary to issue 1,553 notices of personnel actions of various nature. Members of the staff of the Purvis Committee spent considerable time in the Agency during



the reduction-in-force and later asked for detailed written information in order to focus the attention of members of Congress and the Civil Service Commission on our present reduction-in-force regulations. During the fiscal year, 481 suggestions for improving operations were received from Production and Marketing employees. One hundred and forty-seven of the suggestions processed were adopted. Conservative estimates on savings during the first year of operation, limited to those improvements on which savings could be calculated, amounted to more than one-fourth of a million dollars. A special series of suggestion posters with agricultural themes adaptable to the operation of the Agency were developed. The posters are available to other agencies on request. A new poster is released each month.

In Farmers Home Administration, the last fiscal year saw increased emphasis directed toward and placed upon employee development. The Agency's over-all approach to this very important management function was along three basic lines: First, to impress upon each supervisor and administrative officer at all levels and in all offices that one of his most important jobs is to provide adequate and appropriate training for employees under his supervision. Second, to have supervisors and administrative officers, with the help of the employees they supervise, analyze training needs in terms of specific job requirements. Third, to evaluate the results of training and to provide improved training methods and ideas. In line with these objectives, the Agency revised its training policy statement, prepared and issued five proved effective training aids in the form of pamphlets and guides, and made 64 visits to field offices, the primary objective of which was to establish training programs and to promote improved personnel management generally.

During the fiscal year, the Forest Service was active in training foreign nationals under the various Federal technical assistance programs. One unusual project was a forest-fire control study tour of 6 weeks' duration for 42 nationals from 26 countries brought to the United States by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Administration. The Forest Service made every effort to assure that these foreign visitors gathered some knowledge of America and Americans as well as of technical matters.

In the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, a system of follow-up interviews with new employees was put into effect. The interviews were conducted within 90 days after the employee entered on duty with the Corporation. During the interview, questions regarding leave benefits, pay, hospitalization, credit union participation, or any other items in which the employee was interested or which he did not fully understand as a result of his original orientation, were discussed. Questions regarding work assignments, position duties, and working conditions were also answered. The Agency feels that the installation of this type interview is most beneficial not only to the new employees but the Corporation as well.







